

Twin County

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RICK BOUCHER

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Twin County Airport Runway Widening

Hillsville, Virginia

October 8, 2005

I am pleased to return to the Twin County Airport this afternoon to celebrate the Airport's newly widened runway and new corporate hangar. With the completion of these two projects, we mark another step taken in our efforts to improve and expand Twin County Airport.

Since 2001, I have actively worked to obtain federal funding to make improvements to the existing facilities here at the Airport, and to provide for new and expanded amenities which would make the Airport more accessible to larger corporate and other aircraft. Our work has borne fruit, and the federal government has allocated more than \$2.8 million for major airport expansion and improvement projects.

The federal funding has enabled an impressive amount of work to be performed on the Airport. A new aircraft parking apron has been constructed and Precision Approach Path Indicator Lights have been installed. Along the South taxiway, grading and paving work has been completed and Runway End Identifier Lights have been installed along with additional Precision Approach Path Indicator Lights. In addition, a partial parallel taxiway to Runway 36 has been constructed and paved, and separate feasibility and design studies for a new terminal building at the Airport are now complete.

The newly widened runway here at the Twin County Airport was financed largely through a federal grant from the Federal Aviation Administration in the amount of \$1,549,450. In addition to the federal funding, the Virginia Department of Aviation provided funding in the amount of \$48,930. The remaining \$32,620 of the \$1.6 million project was supplied by Carroll County, Grayson County, the City of Galax and the Towns of Hillsville and Independence.

The newly widened runway spans a total of 75 feet and is 15 feet wider than its previous 60 feet. In addition, the entire runway surface, totaling 4,204 feet, has been repaved, including an aircraft turn-around area at the north end of the runway. A new lighting system has also been installed along the runway.

The Airport's improved runway is only one cause for today's celebration. Using funds provided by Twin County Aviation, a new corporate hangar has been constructed at the Twin County Airport. Until now, there has been no appropriate facility to house private jets and other aircraft here at the Airport. With the completion of the building in which we are gathered today, that is no longer the case. The new hangar is 10,000 square feet in size and has the capacity to house and protect 4 King Air B-200 aircrafts, just like the one parked outside the hangar today. The new corporate hangar will be used by Twin County Aviation's airplanes and other corporate planes which make use of the Airport.

Future elements of the Twin County Airport's expansion are in various stages of development. The design study for a new terminal building at the Airport was completed earlier this year, and the next steps are now being taken to enable construction of the new building. In addition, the Airport plans to construct a new T-Hangar, and design work will also begin for this project in the new year. I am currently working to secure the necessary federal funding for these improvements, and I will continue my efforts to obtain the necessary federal funding for each stage of the Airport's expansion.

I would like to take the opportunity of these remarks to recognize several individuals who have been instrumental in the success which we are marking today.

I want to commend Tim Brown, Twin County's Airport Manager, for his excellent work as the major improvements have taken place at the Airport.

Mike Coomes, Chairman of the Twin County Airport Commission, Vice Chairman Tom Jones and the other members of the Commission also deserve our thanks today for the leadership and foresight they have shown and for their dedicated efforts to improve and expand the Twin County Airport.

I also want to thank the Carroll and Grayson County Boards of Supervisors, Galax Mayor C.M. Mitchell, Hillsville Mayor Randall Gravley, Independence Mayor Butch Reeves, Fries Mayor Ken Brooms, the City Council of Galax, and the Town Councils for the communities of Hillsville, Independence and Fries for the financial support that each of the communities is providing to this project and for their commitment to the continued prosperity of the Twin County Airport.

I'd also like to recognize the Carroll County residents, some of whom are with us today, who made personal contributions to enable this project to move forward. Organized by Brian Spencer, a former member of the Carroll County Board of Supervisors, Carroll residents gave a total of \$15,500. We owe all of these individuals a big thank you.

Finally, I want to thank my Project Manager, Courtney Lamie, for her persistent and persuasive efforts in support of the expansion and improvement of the Airport.

The Twin County Airport is now poised to become a major attracting feature for new business investment in Carroll and

Grayson Counties and the City of Galax. I want to thank all here today who have participated in this success, and I look forward to celebrating with everyone the attendant economic benefits which our work at the Twin County Airport will afford our region.